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From the Office of the Director of Health

Shingles Vaccine Now Available for Senior Adults

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department now offers a vaccine to protect senior adults against shingles.

Shingles is a painful skin rash, often with blisters. It is caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV) – the same virus that causes chickenpox. VZV remains in the nerve cells of the body after the chickenpox infection clears and can reappear years later, causing shingles. Anyone who has had chickenpox can develop shingles, but it is more common in people 50 years old or older, people who have suppressed immune systems and people on immunosuppressive drugs.

"The Zostavax vaccine was recently recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices," says immunization coordinator and Registered Nurse, Leslie Davis. "It works to reduce the risk of shingles and the pain caused by it in people who are 60 or older."

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends a single dose of Zostavax for people who are 60 and older. People with suppressed immune systems should not receive the vaccine. If there is any question about eligibility, individuals are encouraged to contact their health care provider to receive the vaccination in the office or to obtain a physician's order allowing the health department to administer the vaccination.

Zostavax vaccine will be provided for \$168.00 per dose at the Westside Public Health Center, located at 660 S. Scenic. Individuals can file with Medicare part D for reimbursement. Call (417) 874-1220 to schedule an appointment.

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